

Chapter VII

OPEN SPACE & RESOURCE CONSERVATION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The Open Space and Resource Conservation Element of the South Pasadena General Plan contains goals, policies and implementation strategies to encourage the conservation and proper management of the community's natural and open-space resources, and to ensure the provision of adequate parks and recreation opportunities for all citizens of the community.

Open space, both natural and developed, is one of the key features that defines the character of South Pasadena and contributes to the quality of life that residents seek to maintain. Open space performs a multitude of functions beneficial to the community: outdoor recreation; view-shed protection; conservation of important natural resources, which provide a hospitable environment for a diversity of wildlife; flood and erosion control; protection of the public health and safety; buffering between incompatible land uses; and the enhancement of roads and public spaces.

Some 5% of the City are presently devoted to open space uses, including parks, golf courses, and passive open space. As a built-out city, the challenge facing South Pasadena is to create an open space system that does not solely consist of the unusable spaces leftover from development, but rather one which integrates parks and playgrounds, connecting "corridors," natural habitats, and natural and cultural resources into a meaningful multipurpose network.

7.1A Purpose of the Element

The purpose of the South Pasadena Open Space and Resource Conservation Element is as follows:

- To clearly identify the natural, environmental and cultural resources of the community;
- To assure their stewardship by the establishment of appropriate resource-related development standards, including but not limited to those assuring the preservation of natural open space for the enjoyment of scenic beauty, for recreation, and for conservation;
- To maintain and enhance those natural resource areas necessary for the continued survival of significant wildlife and vegetation, and to establish a proactively planned, coherent and connected system of open space to protect wildlife habitat and movement corridors as part of a larger, self-sustaining ecosystem;
- To establish the basis for City collaboration with adjacent jurisdictions in broader open space and environmental resource management, including establishment of linkages with adjoining open spaces and trail systems; and
- To maintain and promote the cultural, historic and archaeological heritage of the City.

7.1B Authorization and Scope

State legislation requires the inclusion of both an Open Space Element (Government Code Section 65302(c)) and a Conservation Element (Government Code Section 65302(d)) in all local government general plans. Due to the interrelationship of the goals and policies of the Open Space Element and Conservation Element and the overlap in State requirements, these two Elements are here combined into a single all-encompassing Element.

The Open Space Element must contain goals and policies concerned with managing all open space areas, including undeveloped “wilderness” lands and outdoor recreation uses. The Government Code directs that open space should be preserved (1) for the preservation of natural resources, (2) for the managed production of resources, (3) for recreation, and (4) for public health and safety.

The intent of the Open Space Element requirements is to assure cities and counties recognize open-space land is limited valuable resource that must be conserved wherever possible. The purpose is also to assure every City and County will prepare and carry out open-space plans which , along with state and regional open-space plans, will accomplish the objectives of a comprehensive and integrated open-space program.

Although state law does not mandate the preparation of either a Parks and Recreation Element or a Trails Element in the General Plan, these topics are often included in the Open Space Element which may incorporate goals, policies and implementation programs specifically related to parks and recreation, focus on the relationship of developed park space to a city’s entire open space system, and address the dedication and provision of parkland, trails and recreation facilities.

The Conservation Element of the General Plan overlaps with provisions found in the open space, land use, and public safety portions of the General Plan. It differs, however, in that it is almost exclusively oriented toward natural and cultural resources. The Conservation Element contains goals and policies that further the protection and maintenance of resources such as air, water, soils, vegetation and wildlife, minerals, and archaeological and historic sites, and prevents their wasteful exploitation, degradation, and destruction. “Man-made” resources, or the “built” environment of the city - its architectural fabric - are included here because of the citizen-stated desire to see their conservation.

7.1C Relationship to Other Elements

Policies of the Open Space and Conservation Element do often overlap with provision found in the Land Use and Community Design, Circulation and Mobility, and Public Safety Elements of this General Plan document.

There are a number of other plans and programs, either adopted or under preparation, that bear directly on the aims and objectives of the Open Space and Conservation Element: the consortium of San Gabriel Valley Cities’ Air Quality Element and the City’s own Master Plan of Parks and Recreation. The relevant goals and policies from these plans and programs, where appropriate, have been incorporated into the Element to the fullest degree possible.

7.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

7.2A Development Parklands and Facilities

The parks and recreational facilities within the City of South Pasadena are valued and highly regarded by South Pasadena's citizens. Community parks provide open space and a place to go for active recreation or passive enjoyment of the outdoors. Neighborhood parks and playgrounds within the City of South Pasadena are designed to serve as a place for family recreation within a convenient distance from home.

- **Community and Neighborhood Parks**

Currently there are 92.2 acres of parks within the City of South Pasadena. The majority of this acreage (73.9 acres) is located in Arroyo Seco Park in the northwest portion of the City. Five other parks exist within the City boundaries: Garfield Park, Eddie Park, Library Park, Orange Grove Park and War Memorial Park.

Not included in the total is Lot 117 in the Altos de Monterey residential tract, which the City owns. This unimproved 15.89 acre site presents an opportunity for habitat protection and urban open space, free of development.

Table VII-1 lists these parks with corresponding acreage and facilities.

Table VII-1 City of South Pasadena Recreational Facilities		
Neighborhood Public Parks	Acreage	Facilities
Arroyo Seco Park	19.9	Improved parkland: lighted athletic fields, playground equipment, picnic area; Commercial recreation: golf course, stables; also undeveloped land, flood channel San Pascual Stables 15.7 acres Golf Course/Driving Range 27.8 Racquet Center 3.2 Recycling Center/Cable T.V. 2.0 Vacant Land 4.0 <u>Diversion Reservoir Area 1.3</u> Arroyo Seco Total Area 73.9 acres
Garfield Park	7	Improved park: playground equipment, 2 tennis courts (lighted), picnic area, groomed parkland
Eddie Park	1.5	Improved park: meeting room for special groups, daycare, caretaker residence, groomed parkland
Library Park	2	Library grounds: landscaped with park benches; Community Room, Senior Center, and Library building
Orange Grove Park	2.5	Improved park: softball and soccer fields (lighted), 2 tennis courts (lighted), recreation room, and daycare
War Memorial Park	2	Meeting hall grounds: grounds landscaped with benches and memorials; meeting hall with banquet/kitchen facilities for groups up to 200

A brief description of each park and its facilities follows:

- **Arroyo Park**

The 19.9 acre Arroyo Park is located on the north side of the Pasadena 110 Freeway. Arroyo Park provides major lighted athletic fields for South Pasadena. The park is divided into three sections. The upper section includes three lighted sports fields with backstops, parking and a small concession/storage building and is utilized regularly by the local Little League, American Youth Soccer Organization and softball leagues. A residential building is located on the north side of the park. The center portion of the park includes: group picnic shelter, tables, barbecue, a playground with play structures, storage building and a small amphitheater. The southern portion of the park includes two lighted softball fields. Both the upper and lower parts of the park are utilized for soccer during the fall season. An equestrian/hiking trail is on the south and west perimeter of the park connecting to the Arroyo Seco.

- **Garfield Park**

Garfield Park presently occupies seven acres of land located east of the Central District and north of Mission Street. The park is surrounded by residential development. It provides picnic facilities, lighted tennis courts, open space and a playground for the adjacent neighborhoods. Garfield Park is a popular place for birthdays and picnics. It is also the place where community activities such as the Safety Fair and other community gatherings take place. Other facilities include a horseshoe pit, drinking fountains and a small fire ring.

- **Eddie Park**

Eddie Park is located on the southeast corner of Cheltenham Way and Edgewood Drive. The small .75 acre park includes the historic Eddie House, group barbecue area, and an open lawn area and small play area. The park is framed by a three-foot high brick wall. The two story Eddie House and grounds were donated to the City by the Eddie family. The 2,200 square foot building is an example of Transitional Craftsman architecture. Only the first floor is utilized as a meeting place for various groups and programs that include: a toddler/parent education program from Pasadena City College, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, and an Alcoholics Anonymous group.

- **Library Park**

Library Park consists of 2 acres of landscaped grounds surrounding the South Pasadena Library at El Centro Street, Diamond Avenue, Fairview Avenue and Oxley Street. The park landscape consists of mature trees, mounded grass areas and meandering walkways. Library Park is a passive neighborhood park which reflects the low key activities and functions of the Library and the Senior Center. The Senior Center consists of 800 square feet of space with a separate entrance on the north side of the library building. On the south side of the Library, there are four benches, two bicycle racks and trash receptacles. The grassy mounds are favorite places to read and relax. Programs and activities at Library Park are primarily related to the Library and Senior Center functions.

- **Orange Grove Park**

The 2.5 acre rectangular shaped Orange Grove Park is located at Mission Street and Orange Grove Avenue. As one of the City's older parks, the site was formerly a beer garden and gaming house in 1886. Today, Orange Grove Park is an active recreation park providing facilities for a lighted softball and soccer field, 2 lighted tennis courts, and a small playground. Orange Grove Park has a two-story 9,500 square foot recreation building. The first floor of the building is used for recreation and day care programs. It is also equipped with a restroom accessible from the both inside and outside of the building. The second floor serves as a meeting room for the Chamber of Commerce and other groups. It also provides space as book

storage for the Friends of the South Pasadena Library. Other park amenities include: drinking fountains, picnic tables, bleachers, and a bicycle rack.

- **War Memorial Park**

The two-acre War Memorial Park located on Fair Oaks Avenue provides a site for the two-story 12,000 square feet War Memorial building. The War Memorial building was built in 1921 and is identified as a city cultural heritage landmark. The building was built on the former Oak Law Park with funding from city bonds and donations from the American Legion. The upper floor of the building includes a kitchen and a large multi-purpose room for dancing, meetings, banquets and other activities for groups up to 200 people. The lower floor consists of smaller rooms, storage and restroom facilities but is currently not utilized. The grounds north of the building are dedicated for a landscaped memorial garden.

Each of these parks is shown on the Open Space & Resources Component of this General Plan, included in Figure 1 at the end of this chapter.

- **School Recreation Facilities**

School recreation facilities are owned and operated by the South Pasadena Unified School District. Fields, courts, and playgrounds are available for the use of students during school hours and available to the general public after school, on the weekends, and in the summer.

There are 51.22 acres of school recreation facilities in South Pasadena that help meet the recreation needs of residents. Table VII-2 identifies each school site and the approximate acreage of areas used for recreation.

Table VII-2 South Pasadena School Recreation Facilities	
School	Acres
Marengo Elementary	4.23
Arroyo Vista Elementary	3.70
Monterey Hills Elementary	8.60
South Pasadena Middle School	8.46
South Pasadena High	18.47
TOTAL	43.46

- **Institution and Quasi-Public Facilities**

In addition to parks and schoolyards, additional recreation resources in the city include private and institutional facilities. Private and institutional facilities include private schools, the YMCA, and many local churches that provide additional programs and gathering places.

Privately developed, “open-to-the-public-for-a-fee” enterprises on city-owned land are common. The golf course facility in Arroyo Seco Park is privately owned, maintained and operated, and open to the public: the land is leased from the City. The stables in Arroyo Seco Park are privately owned and maintained, also on land leased from the City.

7.2B Public/Quasi-public Recreation Programs

The Parks and Recreation Department of the City offers an active schedule of quality programs. New and creative approaches to recreational programming for a continually changing community are being implemented. Programs are provided for a range of age groups and it is the Department's policy that these programs be accessible to all residents. Programs are offered at various locations throughout the City in order to maximize the number and variety of offerings. The City also provides facilities for use by Little League, soccer leagues and other organized sports activities, which are the primary users of City owned and maintained sports fields.

Recent trends in recreational programs in the City are geared toward the youth of the City. Table VII-3 describes youth programs and the number of children enrolled in programs.

Table VII-3 South Pasadena Department Of Parks And Recreation Youth Programs Enrollment		
Program	1985	1998
Camp/Summer & Spring	41 per day	90 per day
After School Activities	24 per day	45 per day

In order to provide complete programs for residents, the City also works with community groups and businesses to offer cooperative and interfacing programs. Private, youth oriented organizations utilize a variety of facilities within the City. The YMCA sponsors a number of recreational programs, including athletic instructional programs for the community. The City cooperates with the YMCA to meet the recreational needs of the community.

7.2C Unimproved or “Natural” Open Space

Natural features help define South Pasadena's borders. Raymond Hill, to the north, overlooks the city of Pasadena. The Monterey Hills, in the southwest, straddle South Pasadena's border with Los Angeles. The dry watercourse of the Arroyo Seco, arising in the San Gabriel Mountains and extending to the Los Angeles River, traces the western boundary of the city.

The City seeks to strike balance between accommodating growth, providing recreational relief and developed open space amenities for residents, and conserving the natural environment as an exercise of responsible stewardship.

- **The Arroyo Seco**

The Lower Arroyo Seco provides not only opportunities for recreation but also the potential for a wildlife ecosystem within the City limits. The development of recreational opportunities and protection and restoration of the ecosystem, while recognizing the important flood control functions of the area, should be encouraged.

Along the northeast and east sides of town, the former creek, now flood channel, defines the city boundary and, though traversing residential fabric, it in certain portions provides an already established riparian and wildlife corridor.

- **Hillside Areas**

The hillsides and ridgelines of South Pasadena provide a scenic backdrop for the entire community. Because of the view, potential ridgelines are often the first choice of developers to locate homes.

Protection of the City's hillside areas is a matter of ensuring that development minimizes severe alteration of landform, flood problems, soil erosion, and slide damage. It is also a matter of protecting the "view-shed," both from and to these hillsides, and retaining as much natural vegetation as possible.

The City has adopted a Hillside Development Ordinance to guide development and protect this natural resource. It is the intent of the General Plan to put "teeth" to and strengthen this ordinance, to encourage sensitive forms of development which complement the natural and visible character of the City and its hillsides.

- **Lot 117, Altos de Monterey**

The City owns 15.89 acres of unimproved land in the Altos de Monterey hillside residential tract, commonly referred to as Lot 117. This area is considered an open-space resource to the neighborhood, with no facilities or amenities provided.

- **Private Undeveloped Open Space**

Certain open space lands which do not lend themselves to development or active recreational use have been left in their natural state, maintained under private developments or ownerships rather than under the responsibility of the local jurisdiction.

Such open space lands include the undeveloped portions of hillsides; steeply sloping topography and canyons in the Monterey Hills, Altos de Monterey and other hillside residential tract developments: greenbelts and easements within a few recently-developed housing tracts; and the easements and right-of-way discussed hereinafter.

7.2D "Sensitive" Environmental Resources

Very often constraints to development are, in fact, sensitive environmental resources. Constraints as defined here can include:

- Significant topographic, geologic and hydrologic features such as ridgelines, knolls, fault lines, liquefaction zones, and other similar features determined by the Community Development Department to be important to the physical and environmental character of a property.
- Significant environmental features of the site, including but not limited to riparian habitat, significant ecological areas, slopes in excess of 30% grade, fault zones including Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zones; significant and heritage trees as defined by City ordinance.
- Fuel modification zones required by City ordinance; and
- Subsurface or surface utility easements and rights-of-way not held by the City to be suitable for construction of residential structures.

7.2E Abandoned Easements and Rights-of-way

Flood control channels and their often-abutting service roads, utility easements, and abandoned railroad rights-of-way are frequently undiscovered and unused resources in open space planning and management, and such is the case in South Pasadena.

Even more actively maintained properties, such as reservoir sites or the City's water tower property, may have multi-use potential as open space resources.

7.3 FUTURE CONDITIONS

7.3A Park Planning Parameters

Neighborhood parks characterize South Pasadena, designed to accommodate the needs of its various neighborhoods. These parks provide a place for family recreation within a convenient distance of the home. They are located and designed to serve generally the same area as an elementary school, i.e. 4,000 to 6,000 people. However, the size of a neighborhood park depends on the population within its service area and the extent of amenities provided, generally ranging from about 2 to 5 acres. The following facilities are usually provided within a landscaped setting:

- Play lot and Mothers area.
- Play area and equipment for elementary school age children.
- Paved area for court games.
- Field for organized sports.
- Family picnic area.
- Other special facilities - clubhouse, tennis courts, wading pools, etc.

The following guidelines should be used to meet the City's park space needs:

Planning Guidelines:	Four (4.0) acres of park and recreation facilities per 1,000 persons
Population served:	4,000 to 6,000 residents per park.
Service area:	All residential areas within 1/2 miles distance from a neighborhood park.
Park area:	Between 2 and 5 acres.

7.3B Community Needs Assessment

South Pasadena presently has an adequate supply of parks and playgrounds to meet this requirement. Additional parkland acquisition to meet accessibility requirements should be ranked with other city capital priorities as they are described within the park improvement plan.

Table VII-4 reflects a goal of 108 acres of improved parkland, established for the community at buildout population, based on the City's standard of 4.0 acres of parkland per 1,000 population. The current improved parkland facilities adequately address the needs of both the current population and the forecast population at buildout. When school recreation facilities are incorporated into the assessment, calculated at 50% of usable acreage to account for use restrictions, a surplus of 32.6 acres of parkland exists. Inclusion of Lot 117 - Altos de Monterey in the inventory would increase the available parkland assets even further.

Table VII-4 Community Parkland Needs Assessment						
Status	Population	Acres Needed	Existing Parkland ¹	School Facilities ²	Total Acres Available ³	Community Need
Existing	24,290	97.2	120.4	25.6	146	-48.8
Buildout ⁴	27,265	108	120.4	26.6	147	-39
1. Includes Arroyo Seco, Garfield Park, Eddie Park, Library Park, Orange Grove Park and War Memorial Park 2. Calculated at 50% usable acreage to account for use restrictions. 3. Reflects the use of Lot 117 Altos de Monterey as a passive recreation facility. 4. Population estimate based on Table II-4 (11,652 dwelling units x 2.34 persons per unit).						

Currently, there are no planned additions to existing parks and/or recreational facilities. The municipal plunge, formerly located at Orange Grove playground, was closed in the late 1970's. Previously, the community had identified the desire for a community center/gymnasium.

7.3C Sources of Funding

- **Acquisition and Development**

The Quimby Act, enacted by the State in 1965, provided an implementation mechanism for local park development. This legislation enabled local agencies to require dedication of local park acreage, the payment of fees, or a combination thereof, as part of the subdivision process. The Quimby Act set a standard for a parkland-to-population ratio of 3 acres of parkland per 1,000 population, unless the City has already established a higher rate, as in the case of South Pasadena, which is set at 4 acres per 1,000 population.

As currently amended, the Quimby Act allows the City to require, by ordinance, dedication of land or impose payment of fees in lieu thereof, or a combination of both for neighborhood parks and recreation purposes. The Quimby Act provides that the ordinance must set definite standards for dedication of land and the amount of any fee to be paid in lieu thereof. The City has not established such a regulatory mechanism for the collection of fees and land dedications for acquisition and development of new parks and/or rehabilitation of existing parks and recreation facilities.

Acquisition funding is limited and may compete with funding needed for ongoing maintenance of existing facilities and equipment as well as with other City needs. Because the City does not require land dedication or in-lieu fees for new or infill development, the potential annexation and acquisition of the 8.6 acre "Arroyo Annexation Focus Area" property for open space or recreational purposes would require implementation by other funding sources, including such mechanisms as a Parkland Bonds or General Assessment Bonds. Other funding options can include corporations, individuals, and foundations. The private sector is a viable resource.

- **Operations and Maintenance**

The Public Works Department is responsible for the maintenance of parks in the City.

The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for park operations and recreation programs. Sources of revenue for the Department of Parks and Recreation include camp fees, summer and spring; after-school activity fees, building rentals, contract classes, and special activities fees.

7.3D Commercial Recreation Potential

The private sector represents a relatively untapped resource to the City with respect to the provision of recreation facilities.

Opportunities for joint public/private development of recreational facilities in the City appear to be many, and this and the possible commercial operation and maintenance of existing facilities warrant further studies.

7.3E Sensitive Resources: Natural and Built

Conservation of resources includes undeveloped lands that contain open space for the preservation of natural resources, wildlife habitat, open space, open space for public safety, and conservation of cultural/historical resources.

- **Conservation/Open Space for the Preservation of Natural Resources**

As the remaining parcels of land in the City are considered for development, additional pressures will be placed on the natural environment. Natural and/or primarily undisturbed territory may potentially diminish further, resulting in loss of wildlife or alteration of wildlife distribution, a loss of open space resources and wildlife habitat, and visual relief from the built environment.

The remaining undeveloped or primarily undisturbed open space in the City, located primarily in the following areas, represents opportunities for conservation, habitat protection and open space use:

- The canyons, hillsides and steep topography in the Monterey Hills, and the primarily City-owned vacant, undeveloped lands in the southwest corner of the Monterey Hills;
- The Arroyo Seco and adjacent areas;
- Lot 117 in the Altos de Monterey residential tract;
- The drainage wash east of Garfield;
- The vacated railway easement (between Marengo and Fair Oaks).
- Upper slopes in the Monterey Road/Pasadena Avenue/Kolle Avenue/Brunswick Avenue/Oak Hill Avenue residential areas.

The Land Use Element also establishes a “Focus Area” to evaluate land outside of the City limits adjacent to the Arroyo Seco Channel, termed the Arroyo Annexation, for potential annexation into the City. The intent is to augment the City’s open space resources through a natural extension of presently undeveloped land.

These lands contain natural resources, such as steep slopes, canyons, hillside vegetation (both native and introduced), wildlife travel corridors, drainage courses and vegetation associated with rainfall runoff. Some contain natural resources that can act as a constraint to development; some provide important food source and shelter for wildlife and potential connections to significant open space uses; all help to define the area’s environmental and urbanized character.

- **Conservation/Open Space Used for the Managed Production of Resources**

Open space for the managed production of resources, by definition, includes agricultural lands, areas of economic importance for the production of food or fiber, and areas containing major mineral deposits. In the City of South Pasadena, agriculture and mining are neither current nor anticipated land uses; neither are there any designated Mineral Resource Zones for areas possessing minerals which are of state-wide or regional importance.

- **Conservation/Open Space for Public Health and Safety**

South Pasadena must protect the public health and safety of the community. This involves the identification of areas that pose a potential threat to health and safety, as well as the implementation of proper planning techniques to minimize potential health and safety threats. Such areas in the community requiring special planning considerations to avoid potential hazards include: any 100-year floodplain zones, slopes over 20% grade and wildland fire-prone areas.

There are no portions of the City located within the 100-year floodplain boundaries, as identified by the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). A small portion of the southwestern corner of the City, in the Repetto hillside area, is identified in the Los Angeles County General Plan as having wildland fire hazard potential. In addition, dry grasslands, brush and wood shingle roofs provide fuel for potential fires caused by airborne embers.

Thirty percent grades, representing a constraint to traditional and historical development practices, occur in the hillside areas of the southwest portion of the City. The steeply sloped lands also define the natural landform of South Pasadena and are an aesthetic resource.

- **Conservation of Historic and Cultural Resources**

The City of South Pasadena has completed the Historical Resources Survey: Inventory of Addresses and should use this inventory of significant historical and cultural resources to develop appropriate preservation and conservation programs, guide the location of new developments and redevelopment projects away from areas of significance, determine which properties should be nominated for National Register designation, and generally raise the awareness level of the community to its heritage.

7.3F The “Ambient” Environment

The “ambient” environment - our air and water quality, and our energy resources - can be expected to continue to degrade and deplete without innovation in the conservation of these resources and rededication of effort. These resources, just as much as the more tangible “sensitive” natural resources of the community, warrant attention.

7.3G Connecting Paths and Linkages

- **Existing Recreational Trails**

The City of South Pasadena has approximately 1.2 miles of combined hiking/equestrian trails located within Arroyo Seco Park. The Arroyo Seco equestrian trails provide linkage to other trails in Pasadena north of the stables on San Pascual Avenue, outside the City’s jurisdiction.

Class I and III bike trails, primarily the Class I - Arroyo Seco Trail, provides linkage from South Pasadena south to Lincoln Heights and north to the City of Pasadena. There is a proposed Class II bike trail in Pasadena which would extend south from Del Mar Street in Pasadena to Columbia Street and would ideally provide linkage to the City. Table VII-5 provides a description of these bike trails by class.

Table VII-5 Bike Trail Key For The County Of Los Angeles*	
Class	Description
I	Bike Path or Trail. A separate right-of-way for bicycles; typically fenced and found along flood control channels and the beach. Access is limited to designated points.
II	Bike Lane. A restricted right-of-way for bicycles, most often designated by a painted line and signs on the road. Motor vehicles are permitted to use the bike lane to make turns and to park.
III	Bike Route. A travel lane shared by bikes and motor vehicles, designated by signs only. This type of bikeway does not provide cyclists with increased privileges, but rather, informs motorists of the preferred cycling route.
* According to the Los Angeles County of Transportation, 1992	

According to the Department of Parks and Recreation, a state-proposed Rim of the Valley Riding and Hiking trail would extend from the existing L.A. County Devil’s Gate-Arroyo Seco Riding and Hiking trail (near the Foothill freeway) south through South Pasadena to the County proposed Los Angeles River Trail Extension near the Golden State freeway.

7.4 ISSUES

The primary open space and conservation issues in South Pasadena are:

7.4A Adequate Parks and Recreation Programs

Existing park facilities and recreation programs may not continue, over time, to adequately address the recreation needs of their users. The ability of government to provide recreational facilities and programs, or to assure their ongoing maintenance, is increasingly limited. It is an important goal that the children of the community are offered enough quality programming to keep them interested in positive activities. The corridor of the proposed Route 710-freeway extension, adjacent to if not directly passing through Orange Grove Park, threatens the City's only "hub" for recreation programs.

7.4B Maintenance of Streetscapes

Municipal streetscapes are an oft-forgotten portion of the City's developed open space system. These landscaped corridors provide daily open space relief to motorists, cyclists and pedestrians, and add to the character of the city. The City is known as "The City of Trees" with over 21,000 street trees and mature vegetation presenting a lush and kept appearance. The issue is how to maintain and enhance this landscaped heritage through sensitive design, appropriate regulations, and adequate funding.

7.4C Sensitive Resource Protection

The City must strike a balance between accommodating growth and providing recreational amenities for residents, and conserving what remains of the natural environment of the City. Wildlife and their habitats, sensitive environmental features and natural resources, and the prominent landforms of the City that establish its character - now more than ever, these must be preserved. Very often, areas of great natural distinction and amenity represent development opportunities, particularly in a nearly built-out community.

So too with the built environment. Some of the past must be conserved to remind us of the City's heritage, to establish a sense of place. How much and where, are the pivotal questions. The issue is striking that balance.

7.4D Environmental Conservation

Improving air quality has long been an issue in the Los Angeles basin. The value of vegetation as a significant filter to pollution is now generally recognized. Water conservation, energy conservation, and decreased reliance on fossil fuels is gaining increasing importance in southern California: all are critical issues to South Pasadena as well.

The City has taken affirmative steps in the air quality arena through its participation in the San Gabriel Valley Consortium of Cities' preparation of an Air Quality Element for the region. The Circulation and Accessibility Element of this Plan bears witness to an earnest effort to reduce vehicular dependence in every day life.

Solid waste management has become an issue as available landfill space decreases. The City prepared a Source Reduction and Recycling Element (SRRE) in 1991, to comply with Assembly Bill AB 939 in meeting state requirements for a targeted reduction of waste.

7.5 GOALS AND POLICIES

The following goals and policies have been developed to address open space and resource conservation issues.

Parks and Recreation Facilities

GOAL 1: To promote the design, development and maintenance of a system of parks that will provide a complete range of facilities and activities for all age groups.

Policies:

- 1.1: Seek to develop and maintain parks and recreation facilities at four (4.0) acres per 1,000 persons per the parks improvement plan.
 - 1.2: Ensure all residential neighborhoods are served by at least one neighborhood park to the fullest extent possible.
 - 1.3: Cooperate with the public school district, private schools and other public institutions regarding the joint use of facilities for recreational purposes.
 - 1.4: Set priorities for new capital improvements for those facilities located in areas that are presently under-served by parks and explore innovative ways and means of financing the maintenance and operation of athletic fields and game courts located on all recreational sites.
 - 1.5: Incorporate public plazas and open space amenities in new or infill non-residential development projects.
 - 1.6: Discourage site development and facilities that compromise the natural setting, natural vegetation and open space of the Arroyo Seco.
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GOAL 2: To permit joint development of certain recreational opportunities with private enterprise on city-owned property.

Policies:

- 2.1: Identify joint public/private development opportunities, establish performance standards, and solicit competitive private sector proposals for certain recreational facilities.
 - 2.2: Continue to permit operation of established equestrian facilities on city-owned lands in the Arroyo Seco. (See pg. II-28, Section 16.11)
 - 2.3: Encourage integration of services and recreational facilities in the Arroyo Seco with those in the rest of the City through coordination, marketing, and public information.
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Streetscape & Public Spaces

GOAL 3: To maintain South Pasadena’s established image as “a city of trees” and enhance roadways and urban open spaces by the inclusion of landscaping.

Policies:

- 3.1: Establish and maintain a master plan for street trees on all City streets, including major arterials and infill of the incomplete landscape links on streets already lined with trees.
- 3.2: Cooperate with any local area groups or neighborhood residents in their efforts to beautify their streets with landscaping.
- 3.3: Develop standards and guidelines that encourage conservation of vegetation rather than installation of “hardscape” in the public right-of-way.

Preservation of the Open Space

GOAL 4: To preserve and maintain public and private open space and natural resources for the enjoyment of the entire community, and to encourage a hospitable environment for wildlife.

Policies:

- 4.1: Retain significant trees wherever possible, particularly those that are rare, endangered or candidate species.
- 4.2: Maintain the Tree Preservation Ordinance, and permit development only when it demonstrates compliance with that ordinance.
- 4.3: Encourage preservation of the wide variety of plant communities in the hillside areas, and habitats that support diversity of wildlife species.
- 4.4: Encourage the preservation or creation of wildlife travel corridors and vital links necessary to allow relatively free, sheltered movement between green areas and habitat throughout the City. Avoid site development that isolates an area without a natural/year-round link to other habitat areas.
- 4.5: Control existing and future commercial development of parklands in the Arroyo Seco.

Preservation of Scenic Resources

GOAL 5: To preserve and protect the scenic and visual quality of the community.

Policies:

- 5.1: Maintain and periodically review the Hillside Ordinance that regulates new developments proposed within the hillside areas, such that it will not compromise the aesthetic quality of the mountains, canyons or native vegetation.
- 5.2: Identify scenic routes within the city and develop a demarcation program including signage and route demarcation.
- 5.3: Discourage the location of power lines or transmission towers on or adjacent to any ridgeline by developing a plan for undergrounding utilities.
- 5.4: Discourage hillside projects that promote deep cuts into the hills, heavy excavation and grading that not only visually scars and disfigures the natural beauty of the hillsides but unnecessarily destroys native trees and vegetation.

Landform Preservation

GOAL 6: To ensure that development within the hillside areas of South Pasadena does not adversely impact the character of the city.

Policies:

- 6.1: Respect the natural landform as part of site planning and architectural design, to minimize grading and visual impact, through design review of all project proposals.
- 6.2: Discourage grading on ridgelines and other significant topographic features including knolls, ridgetops, saddles, treelines, significant stands of trees and natural vegetation which damage the integrity of hillside areas, in order to provide off-site views.
- 6.3: Work with the City of Los Angeles to ensure that hillside development within its sphere is compatible with hillside development in South Pasadena, and to develop a natural buffer zone incorporating the hillside space between Los Angeles and South Pasadena.
- 6.4: Coordinate with adjoining municipalities and County fire protection to reduce the threat of wild fires within the hillside areas of the City and adjoining areas.

Connecting Paths and Linkages

GOAL 7: To establish a trail system that meets the riding, hiking and off-road bicycling needs of the residents.

Policies:

- 7.1: Promote trails separate from vehicular traffic wherever possible.

- 7.2: Create bikeways that correlate to the circulation system.
- 7.3: Route bikeways and trails to facilitate access to open space areas, recreational facilities, and schools.

Environmental Protection

GOAL 8: To encourage the conservation of energy.

Policies:

- 8.1: Encourage the enforcement of state energy conservation guidelines that require the incorporation of energy saving designs and features into new and refurbished buildings.
- 8.2: Work with local utility companies with their public education energy conservation program.
- 8.3: Encourage public employees to follow energy conservation procedures designed to reduce energy consumption, such as alternative means of commuting to work.
-

GOAL 9: To encourage the conservation of water.

Policies:

- 9.1: Encourage water-saving practices.
- 9.2: Encourage drought tolerant and native plant material landscaping practices in all public and private development projects and as streetscape materials, and avoid disturbance of native hillside vegetation known to be drought tolerant (e.g., Oak, Toyon, Walnut Trees).
- 9.3: Encourage gray water recycling when in compliance with State and local health regulations.
- 9.4: Encourage the establishment of check-dams and retention basins within the open space system to facilitate aquifer replenishment.
-

GOAL 10: To participate in the efforts to extend the useful life of landfills used by South Pasadena.

Policies:

- 10.1: Encourage recycling of solid waste through the City's recycling program to include all grades of plastics, magazines and phone books, tires, and eventually most solid waste.
- 10.2: Encourage the composting of yard or green wastes.
- 10.3: Encourage the purchase of recycled products for all City operations and offices.
-

- 10.4: Promote the education of residents in the need to purchase recycled products and encourage new markets for recycled products so that these do not themselves end up in landfills.

7.6 IMPLEMENTATION

7.6A The Open Space and Resources Component of the Plan

The Open Space and Resources Component Map of the General Plan reflects the foregoing policies and is presented in Figure VII-1 hereinafter.

Open Space Classifications

The Open Space and Resources Component Map depicts six categories of open space: parks, schoolyards, commercial recreation, open space “corridors”, hillside areas, and other natural open space.

Parks - The parks designation is applied to open space areas that provide active and passive forms of recreation. These areas are owned by the City and accessible to all residents.

Schoolyards - The schoolyard designation is applied to public school sites, owned by the South Pasadena Unified School District. Private schools provide additional recreational facilities to the community but are not accessible to all residents and therefore not identified.

Commercial Recreation - The commercial recreation designation is applied to areas that provide active forms of recreation which require a user fee. Typical commercial recreation uses are golf courses, YMCA, tennis courts, etc.

Open Space “Corridors” - The open space “corridors” designation is applied to greenbelts, landscaped corridors, easements and existing or abandoned utility and railroad right-of-way. These areas have value in that they provide open space relief within the immediacy of the developed urban setting.

Hillside Areas - The hillside area designation is applied to those areas identified for inclusion in the “Hillside Overlay Zone.” In order to preserve significant open space areas in the City’s undisturbed hillside areas, the City has adopted a Hillside Development Ordinance. For properties within South Pasadena with an average slope of 20% or greater, undisturbed hillside and slope areas will be preserved as open space conservation areas through the property owner dedication of upper and lower slopes of lots (either presently developed or yet to be developed) to the City under an open space easement, subject to standards established by the Hillside Ordinance.

Other Open Space - The other open space designation incorporates such areas as reservoir sites, the water tower grounds, other municipal open space ownership, and flood control channels and easements. Lot 117 within the Altos de Monterey is included in this category; the City will preserve it in its natural State as an open space conservation area.

Additionally, the Component Map shows the location of designated historic landmarks and historic districts in the City, and displays existing and proposed bicycle, equestrian and walking trail access to many of the natural and “built” resources shown.

Figure VII-1 - The Open Space and Resources Component Map

7.6B Strategies

Parks and Recreation Facilities

POLICY 1: Promote the design, development and maintenance of a system of parks that will provide a complete range of facilities and activities for all age groups.

Strategies:

- 1.1: Assure that facilities meet demand and that citizen views are known by the periodic review of community needs.
 - 1.2: Consider establishment of an in-lieu fee program for new residential and commercial and/or business park projects.
-

POLICY 2: Permit joint development of certain recreational opportunities with private enterprise on city-owned property.

Strategies:

- 2.1: Identify joint public/private development opportunities, establish performance standards, and solicit competitive private sector proposals for certain recreational facilities.
- 2.2: Continue to permit operation of established recreational facilities on city-owned lands in the Arroyo Seco.

Streetscape & Public Spaces

POLICY 3: Maintain South Pasadena's established image as "a city of trees" and enhance roadways and urban open spaces by the inclusion of landscaping.

Strategy:

- 3.1: Develop standards to control the use of hardscape in parkways.

Preservation of the Open Space

POLICY 4: **Preserve and maintain public and private open space and natural resources for the enjoyment of the entire community and to encourage a hospitable environment for wildlife.**

Strategies:

- 4.1: Discourage grading of any type of natural feature which could be considered a ridgeline, including but not limited to knolls, ridgetops, or saddles, and treelines or significant stands of trees and natural vegetation.
- 4.2: Identify key resources and habitats and acquire easements or land title to maintain natural open space “reserves” throughout the City.
- 4.3: Develop guidelines for dedication of open space and wildlife habitat, payment of in-lieu fees for parkland acquisition, depending upon size and location of development.

Preservation of Scenic Resources

POLICY 5: **Preserve and protect the scenic and visual quality of the community.**

Strategies:

- 5.1: Develop a plan for undergrounding utilities and assuring that streetlights are appropriately unobtrusive on designated streets.
- 5.2: Require all significant impacts of development on sensitive lands such as steep slopes and natural vegetation to be mitigated through the design review process.
- 5.3: Require that appropriate resource protection measures be prepared and incorporated into development proposals.

Landform Preservation

POLICY 6: **Ensure that development within the hillside areas of South Pasadena does not adversely impact the character of the city.**

Strategies:

- 6.1: Maintain clear slope/density relationships as established by the Hillside Overlay Ordinance.
- 6.2: Effectuate and maintain standards and regulations established by the Hillside Overlay Ordinance to regulate hillside development and promote preservation of land where appropriate.
- 6.3: Develop and maintain standards and regulations that retain native vegetation and that protect the “view shed” both from and to hillsides.

Connecting Paths and Linkages

POLICY 7: **Establish a trail system that meets the riding, hiking and off-road bicycling needs of the residents.**

Strategies:

- 7.1: Solicit and utilize sources of local, regional, State and Federal funds to plan, acquire right-of-way and construct bikeways and recreational trails including such sources as SB 821 and SB 244 funds.

Environmental Protection

POLICY 8: **Encourage the conservation of energy.**

Strategy:

- 8.1: Participate in local and state programs aimed at reducing the consumption of natural or man-made energy sources.

POLICY 9: **Encourage the conservation of water.**

Strategy:

- 9.1: Implement and review the grading standards and prohibit “clear-cut” removal of valuable natural vegetation in slope areas where slope erosion could occur.

POLICY 10: Participate in the efforts to extend the useful life of landfills used by South Pasadena.

Strategies:

- 10.1: Continue to implement the provisions of AB-939 as adopted by the State.
- 10.2: Continue to implement and periodically update the Source Reduction and Recycling Element of 1991.

POLICY 11: Maintain elements of the natural landscape that contribute to the historic character of districts, neighborhoods and landmarks.

Strategies:

- 11.1: Maintain elements of the landscape that contribute to the attractiveness and historic character of designated historic districts and landmarks.
- 11.2: Conduct a survey of significant trees in the City. (See also Goal 14, page II-25).
- 11.3: Actively enforce the South Pasadena Tree and Shrub Ordinance (No. 2051) to protect landmark trees and tree-lined streets throughout the City.
- 11.4: Require replacement of landscaping that is identified as a neighborhood feature, landmark or part of a designated district if removal is unavoidable.